

## Overstreet, Greg (ATG)

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**From:** Evan Caldwell [Evan.Caldwell@tdn.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 06, 2006 11:07 AM  
**To:** Overstreet, Greg (ATG)  
**Subject:** Model rules

Thank you, Greg, for working to make access to public information better in Washington. It took me a while, but I read through the model rules. However, I am baffled at why electronic records could be getting harder to gain access to.

In one part of the rules, it states, "The public records officer may provide electronic public records either in an electronic format or by reducing the electronic records to a paper format."

I read this as creating a new, legal form of denial to a public records request. If I want access to a large database with thousands of entries, the public records officer most likely knows I need the help of a computer to crunch the data into something I can use. To do the work by hand would take months. The records officer knows this and could choose to print out 50,000 pages, basically ending my need for the records. Why, if the record even has nothing needed to be redacted and could be e-mailed, can't the law say the records officer should release the electronic version?

I'm also confused by:

- Why deleting a field on a computer is creating a new record and photocopying then manually redacting isn't?
- Why are databases so difficult to export? I've seen many databases from many different software programs and it is not nearly as complicated as it sounds in the model rules. It could create a blurry line between what someone thinks is difficult to export or print out.
- Why is it so difficult to allow the requestor to get electronic records? With these databases getting consolidated and larger, it's not going to be easier to examine the millions of pages and be a watchdog of government.

I've never really had trouble getting electronic records until I arrived at Longview. So a bunch of other agencies (Whitman County, City of Pullman, City of Richland, Benton County, Snohomish County and City of Everett) have gladly released electronic records. It's not hard, but these new rules scare me and seem to cut off access.

Also, I've read the comments online at your Web site and agree with David Cuillier's points. He is more eloquent in his points than I am, but I agree with all of them.

Is there a chance these rules might change?

Thank you for all your work.

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